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CASTLE DAMOURAY,

A

GLIMPSE

OF

FAIRY LAND.

e. 174

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From the Writer.

CASTLE DAMOURAY,

A

GLIMPSE

OF

FAIRY LAND.

BY

ONE OF THE SUNDAY-BORN.
Rev Joseph Jackson, B.A.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON & SONS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
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1875.

BODLEIAN
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THIS LITTLE BOOK

IS DEDICATED TO

HIS VERY GOOD FRIEND

AND FELLOW-STUDENT IN FAIRY LORE,

E. M. E.,

AS A TOKEN THAT HER HE WILL NOT CEASE

TO REMEMBER,

AND WITH THE HOPE THAT SHE WILL NEVER

FORGET

HER GOOD FRIEND,

HER CHOSEN COMPANION,

THE AUTHOR.

November 16, 1861.

To E. M. E.

When, rising on my charmèd sight,
Fair Innocency pure and bright;—
Fair Innocence, the brightest gem
That shines in Childhood's diadem,
A priceless jewel, set in truth,
Illumined by the light of youth,—
Gleams forth in its own radiance pure,
How can it but my heart allure?
Since Maidenhood that knows no guile
Turns on me its resistless smile,
Beams from the eyes that look on me,
Speaks from the lips that speak to me,
My heart admires, my lays applaud,
I love it, and I call it Maude!

THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.

WHO is the Queen of the Fairies? What is her name? I will tell you. I ought to know, since I have seen her, and she has spoken to me, ay, and told me her name herself. I will tell you the story.

I was one evening sitting alone in my chamber, penning some verses, or at least trying to do so, and now and then biting my pen in perplexity, because the pretty thought I wanted would not come. In my despair, scarcely knowing the words I uttered, I thus exclaimed:—

"Would that some kindly little sprite,
Of all I've known, of all I've seen,
Would leave her Fairy haunt to-night
To help me in this present plight,
And, gracious, teach me what to write:
Listen, listen, Fairy Queen!"

Scarcely had these words been uttered, when a gentle tap at the door fell upon my ear. As I rose to open it, a fairy in human guise stood before me. Astonished, I bowed low, and the little wonder of beauty smiled graciously, and said,—

"You wanted me just now, did you not? You see I

have come. I might have sent some one else, but I have preferred to come myself."

"You do me far too much honour," said I.

"Not at all," said she, "I think you deserve it—in fact, I rather approve of you. Now I am ready to help you. What is your difficulty?"

Said I, "I was just now at a loss for a certain pretty thought, a thought that will not come to me."

Then she came forward and whispered the prettiest of fancies in my ear, and bade me write it quickly, that it might not fly away again.

"Thanks—a thousand thanks, my gracious visitant," said I, as I wrote; then fell on my knee to express my gratitude. Then she touched my hand, and said:—

> "Henceforward, what this hand may write,
> Let it ever give delight,
> Be it nonsense, be it sense,
> Let it have its excellence;
> To better sense or nonsense soar
> Than e'er was heard or read before."

Could anything be more gracious?

"To whom," said I, "among all the Pearls of Fairy Land, am I indebted for so much kindness?"

"My name is EVA-MAUDE—I am the Queen of the Fairies!"

Thus saying, she vanished from my sight.

—:o:—

A FAIRY FUNERAL.

THE writer of this was, he rejoices to say it, born on a SUNDAY. "Well, and what of that?" you may ask. Simply this: since it has been his happy lot to enter the world on that day of the week, it is in his power to *see* the Fairies. Ay, every Sunday-born wight who cares to see the Fairies may, on going through the fit ceremony and repeating the Spell of the Eye-lids, see many a pretty sight, many an enchanting scene, in the hidden world of Faërie. There are many races of the dwellers in Fairy-land: the Pixies, the Twlwyth Teg, the Brownies, the Cluricaunes, the Nysses, the Trolls, and many other "little good people," of whom much has been told and written by the Sunday-born. Some of these never die. Others, though they sometimes live much longer than we, die as we do. But they are not buried as we are; oh, no! a Fairy Funeral is a much prettier show.

I was once at a Fairy Funeral. I do not mean to say I was invited thereto, but I was there notwithstanding. They went on with the ceremony just as if I were not there. It did not seem to occur to them that I might be one of the Sunday-born. Thus it happened:—

As I lay down on a shady bank in summer, under a large oak tree, it seemed to me that I heard a very low sound of Fairy music. Thereupon I went through the proper ceremony, and the sound became distinct; there was no mistake about it; it came from behind a hillock near, which prevented them from noticing what I had done. This was lucky, for if they had, no doubt the whole thing would have disappeared in an instant—the procession, banners, horses, plumes and all, with the elfin corpse and all its attendants, would have vanished in a twinkling, the music would have been hushed, and I should not now have been able to describe to you the scene I saw within a bow-shot of Castle Damouray.

First came a troop of elfin horsemen, slowly riding along the sward; then a varied procession on foot, then several troops of damsels clad in white, sashed with green, and all wearing the little bright red cap; in fact, every Fairy I ever saw wore this red cap, and so say all the Sunday-born Fairy-seers of all the lands where Fairies dwell—England, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany—all say so. They bore in their hands the flowers which were at that time in bloom, all of each troop bearing every one the same flower. One band slowly paced along under the pale lilac blossoms of the crane's-bill which waved in their right hands, another under the deep blue of forget-me-nots, next came a moving forest of clustering bugles. I marked also the crimson star of the erodium, the shaking purple tips of

the fumitory, the pale green flowerets of lady's-mantle, and the bright yellow wreaths of the melilot. There were also other flowery bands to the number of sixteen, for sixteen summers only had been seen by the sweet Fay now lying extended upon a bier in the midst of them.

Then ranging themselves around the grave prepared to receive her, thus they chanted the deeds and graces of the little departed:—

"No more amid our circling round
Shall Githa's glancing foot be found;
Long, long shall sorrow be its guest,
Ere peace return to Olaf's breast.
Olaf loved; he loved, he won;
Now sore he mourns for Githa gone.
The youth is plunged in anguish deep,
He pines with grief, but cannot weep.
Tears that give the bosom ease
Will not aid him, Olaf sees
All he loves for aye asleep;
Olaf sees, and cannot weep."

Then others sang in response:—

"Well may Olaf groan and sigh
To see his gentle Githa die;
But 'tis not his to mourn alone,
The human race shall make their moan;
And since the gentle life has fled,
Nature's self shall mourn her dead.
The many-coloured flow'rets now,
Shall miss her cares thus laid below;
Their fragrance die, their hues shall pale,
The music of the grove shall fail;

Their teacher lost the birds deplore,
And trill their melodies no more.
No more, no more in poet's bower,
Mounting on the nodding flower,
Shall Githa in the poet's ear
Whisper thoughts he loves to hear."

Much more than this I might have heard had it not been for a blundering humble bee, who persisted in buzzing round a tuft of purple orchis that grew near, and with his loud hum quite drowned the exquisite harmonies to which I was intently listening. He rather disturbed the ceremony too, for I observed a mounted elf ride angrily up to him, and drawing his sword, make a furious cut at him; but as the buzzing disturber dodged the blow, it unfortunately missed him, and the sweet dirges had come to an end before he at last made off.

Then all, casting upon the grave the flowers they had brought with them, returned in sadness, weeping as they went.

Suddenly a nightingale, that I had before noticed silently perched in the tree above me, struck up his saddest note; and I perceived that he, too, had been attentively observing the scene. Thus he sang:—

"The dew of the morning,
Gemming the grass,
The glow of the dawning,
Vanishing, pass.
The glory of sunlight
Passing doth yield
To dim twilight enfolding
The sky and the field.

"Through the dark hours and silent
Stars jewel the skies;
The morning looks on them,
They fade from our eyes.
The bow many-coloured
That spans earth and skies,
Fading, fast fading,
Vanishing, dies.

"Our star of the morning,
The sun of our day,
The rainbow of gladness,
Has now passed away;
Her spring and her summer
Of youth scarcely gone:
In the winter of sorrow,
Lamenting, we moan.

"'Tis Nature's doom,
All Nature's cry:
To bud, to bloom,
To fade, to die!"

Thus sang he, and ceased.

The place of the little grave I noticed next Spring, and there grew a tuft of primroses! I have since quite satisfied myself that wherever grows a primrose, there some little sprite has been laid by its fellows. You have seen a meadow in Spring-time dotted over with primroses? That is a Fairy cemetery. They are more in number by far than we are; no wonder their graves are so many. You have often, no doubt, plucked bunches and bunches of primroses. Never mind; you offend no Fairy by doing so. The root grows stronger, and the flowers grow all the more plentifully when

some have been plucked, and the buried Fay that sleeps beneath is thus kept the longer in the remembrance of its kindred.

Where'er a primrose greets the eye,
There a Fairy corpse doth lie;
The yellow blossom guards its sleep,
And bids its Fairy kindred weep.

——:o:——

A TALE OF TWO QUEENS WHO EACH LOST A TREASURE.

It happened, once upon a time, as the evening came on, that the Queen of the Fairies, with all her retinue, had just returned from hunting, and she, seated on a bank of clouds in the rosy west, was dispatching one messenger after another on various commissions. Suddenly among a group of these messengers a dispute arose as to which of them was the swiftest in performing the commands of the Queen—which of them was the swiftest courier of Fairy Land. Scud-the-wave, who sped over sea and land in a sledge of shell, and Shooting-star, who is often to be seen flashing across the sky of night, each claimed the superiority.

Now the Queen wore on her finger a ring which had been handed down from one Fairy Queen to another for more than four thousand years. Oberon, the Fairy King, had, four thousand years ago, given it to his Queen Titania on her marriage, and all her successors had worn it, until at last it glittered resplendent on the finger of Queen Eva-Maude. Of this ring it was said, in the Elfin Chronicles:—

"The wearer of this ring, I trow,
Whatever she may wish to know,
Whatever she may wish to be,
Whatever she may wish to see,
Wherever she may wish to go,
Shall have her wish, it shall be so."

This precious jewel, then, in order to decide the dispute between the two contending fays, she drew from her finger, and flinging it from her, said:—

"Speed on round the earth, my ring, with the swiftness of a lightning flash for a full day, and let us see which of these boasters is indeed the fleetest, and will first overtake it and restore it to me. Meanwhile I will pass the night here."

Thus saying, she dismissed her attendants, and, recumbent on a roseate cloud, betook herself to rest. Mortals, looking upward and beholding the splendour of the hangings of her chamber, wreathed about with rose-colour and purple, and edged with bright gold, exclaimed, "See, the sun is setting; how beautiful!"

Meanwhile the two competitors, after a moment's pause from sheer despair at the trial of speed required of them, dashed after the ring in pursuit. On and on they flashed forward untiringly until sun-rise, but they saw not the ring. On and on, until the sun had set again, but still they had not overtaken it. But the ring, at the end of the twenty-four hours, having no orders to proceed an inch further, fell to the earth, having left the pursuing Fairies far behind. There

it lay glittering on the grass. But the Fairies at length, speeding along, passed over the spot where the ring had dropped. Despairing of ever coming up with it, for now the sun had twice set since they started, they returned sad and wearied to their Queen, and gave a faithful account of their luckless race, and its vexatious result. She, you may well suppose, felt both grieved and angry, for until that ring might be recovered, much of her power was gone. But her anger did not last long, since she considered that at all events Scud-the-wave and Shooting-star had done their best. Therefore she quickly pardoned them, being both gracious and merciful, as a Queen of the Fairies should be. Nevertheless, she sent her messengers over the wide world to seek for it, and bade the birds in their songs proclaim the loss in every land to which they came; and in the beginning and end of their songs thus they sang:—

> **"Sing, sing, little birds sing,**
> **The Fairy Queen has lost her ring.**
> **Whoe'er restores this ring, please say,**
> **Shall bear a rich reward away."**

But though the news was trilled forth in every forest and grove in the four quarters of the world, nought was heard of the Lost Treasure.

Now Eva-Maude was on very intimate terms with Eva, the Queen of King Ryence. They were often in each other's company, and used to bathe and arrange their hair together, using the grove for their tiring-

room, and the clear stream for a mirror. Often did they amuse themselves together, hunting and hawking, when Eva used to ride at Eva-Maude's right hand; in fact, they were very good friends; they had no secrets from each other. So the Fairy Queen told Eva of her unfortunate loss, and they grieved over it together.

But to return to that precious circlet, the ring. It had not long lain upon the earth before a magpie spied it glittering amid the grass. She swooped down, and bore it off to her nest. There she placed it with one egg she had just laid, and was very proud of both her treasures, though one of them was, properly, none of hers; but she was a great thief. There the ring might have remained until the Fairies had ransacked every nook and cranny of the earth for it a thousand times over, had it not been for this incident:—

Two nurses were roaming the greenwood, each with a little child in her bosom, the one a girl and the other a boy, the twin children of King Ryence, who lived hard by at Castle Damouray. Presently one of the girls, peeping over the hedge, exclaimed with delight to the other, "Look at that bank yonder, covered with beautiful yellow daffodils, nodding so prettily at their shadows in the brook below! Let us go into that field and gather some." So they did, clambering over the fence. But they could not think of dragging the babes with them through the thorny bushes, for it would have torn their embroidered long clothes, to say nothing of

scratching their plump little cheeks; so they left them at the foot of a tree to take care of themselves, while they gathered the daffodils.

At the same time a boy, who came along whistling, with his hands in his pockets, peering into the bushes and staring up into the trees, had marked the magpie's nest, and instantly determined on plundering it. Climbing the tree, he came up to the nest, and found the one egg and the ring. "Hollo!" said he, "what a remarkable find." He tried the ring on his fingers. "No, it will not go even on my little finger, but it is the jolliest little ring I ever saw. I suppose I shall find some use for it."

So saying, he pocketed the ring, and, like a true bird-nester, placed the egg in his mouth, and scrambled down again. Presently he came to the place where the little babes were placidly amusing themselves at the foot of another tree at a little distance. "Hollo!" again said the lad, "wonders never cease; here's another remarkable find. Who'd ever have thought of finding a couple of unprotected innocents here! What a pretty child this is," said he, as he looked in the face of baby Alice. "A capital idea—so I will," said the good-natured boy, dragging out of his pocket a top, some whip-cord, a shoe-lace, a few marbles, an old glove, an apple, some buttons, and a toy-boat, &c., from among which, with some difficulty, he picked out the fairy ring. "I'll give the ring to this little one," said he, and

he placed it upon her finger. "Now I'm a married man," he said, with a merry laugh, "but I must not leave my little wife here alone until I see whether there is anybody to take care of her." So he looked about to see. Presently he spied the two nurse-maids, and calling to them, he satisfied himself that all was right, and trotted contentedly away.

Now little Alice was a much-enduring child. Sometimes they gave her her food too often, and too much of it, and sometimes it was in too hot a state, and when she could not swallow it fast enough, they used to pat her on the back, which only made matters worse. Sometimes the nurse very awkwardly stuck in the pins which held on her garments, and when she cried because she felt them sticking into her little person, then they dandled her violently, and also patted her on the back, which, of course, hammered in the pins nicely. Thus she became discontented in her little soul, and had often wished that she might be anything else than what she was, and nothing particular had come of it. This time, however, it was different.

Seeing a butterfly playing about near her, she thought, "What a pretty creature that is; I wish I could fly about just so!" The ring instantly performed her wish: she became a butterfly, and, flitting gaily away, rejoiced in the change.

What were the feelings of the nurse-maids, do you think, when, returning with the daffodils, they found

that from the place where they had left the two children one had disappeared? Throwing aside the daffodils, they ran about distractedly, searching everywhere; but it was of no avail. They were obliged to return to Castle Damouray, and tell what had happened. Then all the castle turned out on the search—knights, squires, pages, grooms, stable-boys, and all, horsemen and footmen, going eastward and northward, and southward and westward; but nowhere did they find the lost Alice, and the mother wept at the thought that she might never see her child again. Inconsolably she gazed upon the empty cot in which baby Alice had so often slept, while she gazed upon the dear little features smiling in dreams. For long hours at a time that little cot was her only companion, bereft as it was of its beloved inmate, now her Lost Treasure.

At the first opportunity she told the Fairy Queen of her loss, and now they were indeed companions in sorrow. "Your loss," said Eva-Maude, "makes mine a thousand times more grievous than it seemed before, since now my ring is gone I cannot help you so readily as I would. I cannot immediately ascertain all that you and I wish to know, as I once did, or I would speedily find whither your child is gone. However, I will do the best I can." She then commanded her servants to seek over the wide world for the child Alice. She also bade all the birds proclaim the loss whithersoever they went. This they did, singing repeatedly:—

"Listen! Ryence' Queen is weeping;
Her child is lost; from nurse's keeping,
Some foul hag, some wicked fay,
Has stolen Ryence' child away."

Little thought Eva and Eva-Maude that their losses were so nearly connected, and that, in fact, the one loss was the cause of the other. But so it was. A long time passed, and nothing came to light either of the ring or of the child Alice. The one loser had lost half her power, the other had well nigh lost all heart with sorrow.

Meanwhile the butterfly Alice, winging her way delightedly from flower to flower, sipped the sweetest juices from each gem of the meadow, the garden, and the grove. Now and then, when she met any one of the busy honey-making race, she took a sip from his honey-bag, a treat which every industrious little bee was only too proud to give to so pretty a creature. Thus merrily and without care she lived, ever on the wing, following along the track of the sunshine, and at sunset taking shelter for the night in the clumps of ivy and the hollows of the trees. But, nevertheless, she often thought of her dear parents, how they would grieve when they sought her, but found her not. On this account how gladly would she have regained her home; but unfortunately it did not occur to her infant mind expressly to wish for this, therefore to her home she could not return.

In process of time the year began to wear on towards winter, the prettiest flowers were fading, the winds blew cold, and butterfly Alice could endure it no longer. She learnt from the butterflies that at this time of the year they usually found themselves crevices in old walls, and chinks in the bark of trees, in which to shelter themselves, and to pass the winter in a half-frozen state. But they said that few indeed of them lived until next spring. A prospect like this was dreadful.

Seeing one day a lamb very contentedly grazing as if he did not mind the cold in the least, she thought: "If I were such a one as he, covered with a warm fleece, I should have no need to fear the winter; I wish I were as he is!" Instantly, to her astonishment, she became a lamb. However, she found it very comfortable to have warm clothes without the trouble of taking or having them taken off and on, and better, too, than those she had worn in her butterfly days, since they would not spoil with the rain.

She was not long left to herself, but was taken with many other sheep and lambs on board a ship which was bound for India. All this live mutton was taken on board in order that the passengers might have fresh meat on the voyage as long as possible, until they should be obliged to eat what had been salted and stored up for the long voyage. They were placed in very crowded and uncomfortable pens, and you may be

sure that lambkin Alice did not like these arrangements at all. But it was no use bleating, though bleat she did, and that piteously. It was still more distressing when at least two of them were butchered every day in order to be eaten, and none of them knew when it might be their own turn next. Many weeks had passed, and now only two lambs were left, of which Alice was one. Had she not happened soon to make another wish, she must next day have died under the knife of the butcher, and here the story would have ended.

Then while thinking on her present misery and danger, it occurred to her to wish herself one of the birds she had often heard singing so sweetly, as she lay on the grass, before they carried her away to sea. "Oh, that I could be the one that sings most sweetly of all!" she thought. She became a nightingale.

Instantly she darted out of the wretched pen, and, perching upon the bowsprit, began the sweetest song that ever nightingale sang. This at once called the attention of the passengers and crew. They were all struck with astonishment to see, when they were more than a thousand miles from land, a little feathered songster make its appearance among them. One or two of the passengers, who were naturalists, pulled out their note-books; another sent, by the first ship they met returning to England, a wonderful account of it in a letter to the "Times." Some said it was a good omen

for the voyage, and some rather preferred to take it as a sign that they were doomed to end their voyage at the bottom of the sea. Opinions were divided. But when the butcher and the ship's cook discovered that one of the lambs had disappeared, they were struck with amazement. Every hole and corner in the ship was ransacked, but to no purpose. To this day it is a joke among the crew which of them, in so wonderfully short a time, could have eaten that lamb.

Arrived in India, Alice, the nightingale, flew away at her own sweet will, and was filled with gladness at the sight of the delightful land, gorgeous with flowers, luxuriant foliage, mighty trees, and pathless jungles. Now and then she heard the roar of the lion, and the crashing of the elephants amid the thickets. She saw the tigers rushing upon their prey, but she felt no fear, because her wings would preserve her from cruel wild beasts, and all the human race loved her for her song. When she began to sing, the chattering monkeys, the screeching macaws, and noisy cockatoos, ceased their clamours, and the voices of the forest were hushed; the very leaves of the trees were stilled to attention. She sang to them the story of all her short, changeful, and innocent life. Though they understood not the meaning of the song, all wondered at its melody. She lamented her lost home, bewailed her separation from all who loved her. Her song remembered her father and mother, her twin brother, her kind elder brothers

and her sweet sisters. All the land was before her, boundless, luxuriant, exquisite in beauty. Surely here was everything to make her happy; but she was alone among the millions of living creatures, a little lonely bird whom no one understood. Who was there to love Alice? Echo answered not, but only repeated the question. Who was there to take care for Alice? Not one.

One day, as she hopped about in search of food, pecking at this, and tasting of that, and choosing of the nicest, she spied the most tempting of food lying upon the ground. Perching on a twig to eat it, she found herself stuck fast by the feet, and, poor little thing, she could not escape. The twig had been smeared with bird-lime, and the bait placed near it by a little Hindoo bird-catcher. Soon making his appearance from his concealment in the wood, he quickly seized his prize, and ran home delighted to shew it to his mother. "See, a nightingale this time, in full song, too, mother I heard it singing beautifully just before it was caught. See, it has such a pretty little ring upon one of its claws; it must be a wonderful bird!" The boy's mother was a poor widow, who supported herself and her son as well as so poor a woman could; and he, on his part, now and then turned a few pence by entrapping and selling birds. "I will search out some great lord," said he, "who will buy the bird of me." "Do so, my son," said the widow, "and may you have good luck in the sale."

So the boy put Alice the nightingale into a cage. Then she began to sing, telling all her story, and entreating their pity, begged for liberty. But they understood her not, though the sadness and beauty of her song drew tears from their eyes. Poor as they were they felt loath to part with their new treasure. However, the boy trudged off with his prize to a great city a few miles off, to Delhi, the city of the Moguls. As he drew near the palace of the Great Mogul, he came upon a magnificent procession of elephants, bearing some great personages, with guards around them, proceeding to the palace. He enquired from some bystanders whither all this train was going. They told him that this was an embassy from the King of Persia to the great Mogul, whose palace they were just now about to enter. "I, too, will go to the Great Mogul," said the boy, "and ask him if he will buy my bird." The bystanders laughed at him. But the boy, following close behind the procession, entered the palace. There, when he declared that he had a petition to ask of the Great Mogul, the officers dared not thrust him away, as the Mogul was in the habit of severely punishing those who prevented petitioners coming to him. But after keeping him waiting a long time, till the audience of the Ambassadors was ended, they conducted the boy into the Mogul's presence.

The boy began the interview as he had been instructed by the officers of the Court, by making his

best salaam, knocking his forehead on the floor, and then wishing that he, the Mogul, "the Brother of the Sun and Moon, and First Cousin to all the Stars, might live to illumine the earth with his presence for ages after all his relatives had faded from the sky!" Then he showed his nightingale with the wonderful ring, and begged his Majesty to "buy a treasure of a bird from a poor boy, who, with his poor widowed mother, would be for ever grateful."

Then the bird began to sing as before, so that all who were in the presence began to shed tears, except Craftifoxo, the Grand Vizier, and Bloodseeko, the Minister of War. They did not weep, because their cruel thoughts were at that moment fixed upon something else. This was nothing less than a plot they had just secretly concluded with Thirstrule, the Cousin of the King of Persia, who had come with the Embassy for that very purpose. The plot was to surround the palace with soldiers on a certain day agreed upon, to seize the Mogul, and, having put him to death, to place Thirstrule on the throne in his stead. Craftifoxo was filled with glee at the thought of the immense heap of gold pieces which Thirstrule had promised him for his share in the business; and Bloodseeko, standing near a window, was thinking in his cruel soul how delightful it would be to see the Mogul thrown out there upon the spears of the soldiers. No wonder, then, that an innocent song of sadness could not move them to tears.

It happened that the Great Mogul was very fond of birds, of which he had a great many of every sort and of every song singing, in gilt cages, throughout his palace. But he particularly admired a bird which sang so exquisitely as this. So he said to the boy, "What price, my good lad, will content you for your bird?" The boy replied, "May it please your Majesty, perhaps you will be so good as give me one gold piece." "Give him a hundred," said the Mogul. So his treasurer counted out a hundred gold mohurs, and a clerk of the treasury tied them up in a silken bag, on which was embroidered the crest of the Moguls, a flame-breathing tiger. This the Mogul gave to the boy. How could he express his gratitude? With a burst of tears he fell at his feet, and "hoped that for his kindness to the poor widow and her son God would watch over him and protect him to the end of his days." This, coming from his heart, was a much better wish than the flattering one he had been taught by the Court officers, and much more likely to be of use, as we shall see presently.

Thrusting the bag of gold into his bosom, the boy ran all the way back to his mother, who was filled with joy and gratitude at his good fortune. With the money they bought a cottage, with some land round it, and were thus placed above the want they had hitherto felt. The widow carefully preserved the bag as a memorial, that they might never forget to pray for their bene-

factor, and to bless Him who had moved their sovereign to be so generous.

The nightingale Alice became the daily delight of the Mogul, who in the evening, when all his affairs for the day had been transacted, loved to retire to his chamber, to the society of his books and bird Alice, who was there installed in a cage of silver wires, adorned with gold and brilliants.

But one day, while the Mogul was absent, she overheard Craftifoxo eagerly talking to another outside, giving all the details of the plot. Wishing she might understand what was passing, she gathered that an army had been collected at some distance in readiness for the undertaking, the people in the place where they were encamped being led to suppose that they were some troops which the Mogul himself had caused to be raised. She perceived, too, that he pointed out to the other that very room in which she was as the place in which, when they had attacked and surprised the palace, they would find the Mogul himself. They intended to throw him out of that window among the soldiers, that his murder might not be laid to the charge of any one of themselves in particular. This plot was to be put into execution in three days from that time.

Hearing all this, she was filled with terror for him whom she knew to be so good-hearted, so generous, and who had treated herself so kindly. Hence she determined that as soon as he should come again to that

room to warn him of the plot against his crown and his life. She fervently wished he might understand her song of terror, and her wish, of course, was gratified by virtue of the ring.

As soon as he came in that evening she began her story. At first he was surprised to find her song so different from the sad and gentle strain it was wont to be, and then to find himself listening to the story of the danger which was so imminent. She advised him to prepare himself against the evil designs of his enemies without losing a moment.

After many expressions of gratitude to his feathered counsellor, he betook himself to making preparations for frustrating the plot. He sent by trusty messengers secret commands to his Generals, and many of his faithful nobles, near and far, on all sides of the city. They were each to collect their followers, and march their forces straight towards the city, in such a manner as to arrive at the same hour in two days from that time, and to surround the army of the conspirators on all sides. This being arranged, he caused Craftifoxo and Bloodseeko, and the other conspirators who were in the palace at the time, to be arrested and put in dungeons under the palace. All in the end fell out as fortunately as he had intended. The army of Thirstrule, just as it was preparing to march against the city, confident of success, was struck with amazement and horror. They saw troops advancing from all sides, almost at the same

moment, displaying each on their banners the flame-breathing tiger of the Moguls. Under this crest, they well knew, was written the motto terrible to them: "Good to my friends, evil to my enemies."

Now Bird Alice, in her anxiety for the Mogul's safety, had eagerly wished she might know all that was passing, and therefore so she did. As the crisis came on, she beat herself against the bars of her cage, twittering piteously, "Would I were there! would I were there!"

Just as the Mogul, who had in the meantime joined his friends, was raising his sword as a signal for the onslaught, in which no doubt well-nigh all his misguided enemies would have been cut to pieces, both armies paused as they heard what seemed to them angelic notes trilled forth from the throat of a little bird that fluttered above them. As the sun shone over them, the ring on her foot glittered in its light, while they all paused to listen. This was the song of Bird Alice:—

"Oh King, my King, this is not good;
Stain not your royal hands with blood,
Show mercy as the mighty should.
If the mighty will not show it,
If a monarch will not know it,
Where shall he find mercy when
God judges all the sons of men?
From the standard
Of your race,
That evil word,
O King, erase;
Forget revenge;
Revenge is base.

Blot it out, a thing abhorred,
'Evil' 'tis an awful word!
A King should rather render less
The sum of human wretchedness,
Than add to it the fire and sword.

Mercy, mercy,
Bright renown,
Brighter, purer,
Nobler, surer,
Gives a monarch
Than his crown.

On blood, on blood, no throne is built,
But ends in ruin, shame, and guilt;
Below the sky, the sky above,
The surest Throne is built on Love."

Then she flew away, and the Mogul saw her no more. As the song ceased, the sword fell from his hand, and all the host of Thirstrule immediately laid down their arms, and submitted themselves to his clemency. He used his bloodless victory with moderation, however, and contented himself with punishing a few of the ring-leaders, but their lives he spared.

And it was told throughout all India how a nightingale, wearing on her foot a jewelled ring, had preserved a great king, his throne, and his life, and had saved an army of men from death. This news was brought by the birds to the ears of Queen Eva-Maude. She, as the readiest way of recovering the ring, immediately dispatched a swift hawk in quest of the bird that had become so famous.

Long-wing, the hawk, after chasing many a nightingale to no purpose, at last found the very little bird of which he was in search flitting about on the banks of the Jumna. He immediately gave chase, and poor nightingale Alice sped away before the fierce bird of prey with all the speed that terror could give. Soon she heard the loud clapping of his wings close behind her, and began to give up herself for lost. They were now passing over a lovely spot covered with roses; these, lifting up their heads to her, covered as they were with the dew, seemed to weep for the unhappy fate of nightingale Alice. Envying their serene and calm life there in the wilderness, she thought, "Would I were one of them!" She became a rose in the midst of them.

The hawk found himself baffled, since the object of his pursuit, just as he was extending his talons to grasp it, seemed suddenly to disappear among the roses. It would have saved Bird Alice a sad fright had she known that Long-wing had been ordered to do her no injury, but only to bring her before the Fairy Queen.

Rose Alice had scarcely sufficient time to admire herself and her new comrades, before a richly-attired young man came to the place. According to the Elfin Chronicles, already quoted, and to which I am mainly indebted for the materials of this narrative, his name was L'Amour-hélas, and he is stated to have been the youngest son of the Rajah of Rewah. He seemed to be in deep thought, and looking carefully among the roses,

his eyes fixed upon the one he thought the most beautiful. This was Rose Alice.

Plucking her from the stem, he presently took her to the neighbouring city, where his ladye-love resided. Coming before the window at which she was sitting, he threw up to her the flower. To the stem he had affixed this inscription, "Go, beautiful rose, loveliest of flowers, and tell my love how much she resembles you." Leila, for that was her name, rewarding him with a smile, took up the rose, and read the inscription. It is not recorded what she said or thought of it; no doubt she thought the sentiment a very pretty one, and not in the least too complimentary. She placed Rose Alice in a vase, and delighted herself with the sight.

From the vase in which she was placed Rose Alice looked around her, and observed Leila fondling a pet dove which was feeding from a silver vessel. "What a sweet creature that is," she thought. "How fond her mistress is of her, and how kindly she is treated." She watched the dove as she was now pecking millet-seeds from the lips of Leila, then perching on her shoulder as she sang to the music of her lute, cooing delightedly. Leila loved her feathered pet, and called her Minna, and Minna loved the sweet daughter of the Khan of Kotah with all the love of an innocent bird's heart. As her mistress ceased her song, and closed her eyes in dreamy happiness, Minna snugly placed her head under her wing, and addressed herself to rest also.

As Alice was beholding, her leaves were fading; she felt her life ebbing away with the perfume she gave to the air around her. She had no one to love her, no one to cherish her. The dove was happy, she was dying. "Oh!" said she, "that I could, like that sweet bird, nestle under her warm cheek and be happy!"

Then Leila was startled on awaking to find another besides her own pet thus seeking to win her love. "Pretty creature! whence come you?" said she, fondling her kindly. Both doves vied with each other in loving attentions, but both were too innocent to feel anything like jealousy. Leila clapped her hands with delight; but presently observing the ring on the foot of Dove Alice, she concluded at once that she was a stray pet belonging to some one like herself, who would sadly grieve at her loss. Though sorry to part with a bird who had so captivatingly sought her affection, she, nevertheless, thought it right to call her attendant, and bid her take the bird away some distance, and then to release it, that so it might find its way back to its owner. So it was done, and poor Alice was again alone and friendless.

As she was perched, sorrowful and dejected, amid the thick foliage of a banyan tree, she heard the noisy twittering of an army of larks. Listening to it, she understood that they had now assembled in order to return to the land which they had left six months before, as the winter came on there, in order to take

refuge from the cold in this warmer climate. At the time of their arrival in India, they had numbered fifty-five thousand five hundred and fifty-five, but since that time, from different causes, they had now dwindled down to fifty thousand five hundred and five. Some had been shot, some had been caught in traps, some in nets; some had been sold in the markets, cooked and eaten; some had fallen a prey to tame and wild cats, to hawks and other fierce devouring birds; while some few had died of old age, and more from eating too freely of the good things of India. She heard them say that when Chirrevit, their king, heard the result of the census, he wept, for he was a good king, and loved his people. Now it was time to return to the land whence they came, lying between the German Ocean and the Irish Sea, which they called "the White Island."

Then, thought Alice, she should like to join them. Perchance, going with them, she might come to the land from which her fate had severed her—the land of her home and her parents. "At least, since no one cares for me, I should like to find friends among them. Would I were one of them!"

She became so, and was delighted. Then King Chirrevit commanded, "Call the roll." And they called over the roll. When the fifty thousand five hundred and five had all answered to their names, Alice timidly presented herself. As soon as they saw her, she was greeted with a deafening and universal trill:—

Rejoice, oh larks, rejoice and sing;
Bring her, bring her to the King—
That little lark that wears the Ring!
Sing, sing,
The Ring! The Ring!
A little lark lady is wearing the Ring!

And they brought her before the king, to whom she told all her story, as far as she could remember it, which was not very distinctly. It seemed to her very like a long dream, of which she could only remember the last part. How she came by the ring, she could not tell; she had worn it ever since she could remember.

Then Runyouthrou, who held the office of executioner among the larks, worked himself into a fury when he heard it. "She is a vile thief," he said, "she has stolen the ring." And he was about to run his sharp and cruel bill through Bird Alice's body, before a trial had been begun or sentence had been pronounced, had not those near him dragged him back, and so prevented his ruthless purpose. "She has committed treason against the Fairy Queen, by holding the ring in her possession," said his councillors. The king then said, mildly, "If treason has been committed against the Fairy Queen, she alone must decree the punishment." He was a lark of gentlemanly feeling, as a king of the larks should be, and would suffer no insult or severity to be shown to her. Of her whose manners were so gentle, whose innocence was so evident, one like himself could think no ill.

"We will conduct you, Bird Alice, if you permit us, to the court of Queen Eva-Maude. There all the truth will be discovered. Meanwhile, I offer you my protection. Will you go with us?" She answered, "Willingly; I accept your goodness; I will go."

Then King Chirrevit ordered a palm-leaf to be plucked, upon which the larks in turn might bear her on the long, long way. He also appointed her a guard of honour of fifty of the trustiest of his subjects, and caused to be chosen twelve lark-maidens to be her attendants; and thus they proceeded on their voyage through the seas of air to the White Island.

When they had proceeded a whole day, and the sun was now setting, the king commanded a halt. "Call the roll," said he. And they called the roll. Then it was found that a hundred and one of their number had perished, and now there remained fifty thousand four hundred and four; the rest had died of fatigue. "Poor creatures!" said Chirrevit, "they were too weak for the journey—they could not have survived it." But he was sorry for them. Then he sent this message: "How fares Bird Alice—she that wears the ring?" And she sent an answer: "All well. She bids us thank you, gentle king." When he heard this, King Chirrevit erected his crest, for he was well pleased with the welfare of Bird Alice and the answer she had sent him.

Then all the larks took food and rested until day-

break, when they again set forward. On and on they sped until the sun set again. "Call the roll," said the king. And they called the roll. This time only fifty thousand two hundred and two answered to their names; the rest, to the number of two hundred and two, had died of fatigue. Then the king wept and was very sad, for he grieved for his subjects. Again he sent the message: "How fares Bird Alice, bearer of the ring?" and was answered: "All well. She bids us thank you, gentle king." Then the king's spirit revived again, for he was pleased with the welfare of Bird Alice and the answer she had sent him.

And they all took food again and rested until day-dawn. Then they set forward again, and at about mid-day came in sight of white cliffs. This was the coast of the White Island. Still they flew onward, slow and wearied, until Chirrevit again commanded the roll to be called. Now only forty-nine thousand eight hundred and eight answered to their names, for three hundred and ninety-four of their number had perished. He wept bitterly at the loss of his subjects. Then he thought of Bird Alice, and composed himself. He went to her in person this time, and asked her how she had fared on the journey. She answered "that she had, thanks to his majesty's kindness, found the journey delightful." King Chirrevit said, that "to hear that alone from her he felt to be more than a sufficient reward for the kindness of which she spoke."

Then he asked that she should now hold herself in readiness to appear before the Queen and Court of Faërie. "And it will be no small honour to me, and give me no small pleasure, to present you, sweet Alice, to the Queen whom Chirrevit and all the Larks obey."

So it was done, and King Chirrevit presented Bird Alice to Queen Eva-Maude, and said: "May it please the Queen whom Chirrevit and all the Larks obey, we have the honour of conducting to your presence one who wears the precious ring for which you bade us, three summers ago, to seek. She having come by it innocently (I will pledge my kingly word), now willingly restores it to its rightful owner. Chirrevit has spoken."

Then Bird Alice coming forward, held up her little foot to the Queen. As the Queen took off the ring, the whole assemblage, instead of Bird Alice, beheld a sweet little girl standing among them! So great and engrossing was the astonishment of most of them, that few observed how moved with grief, how smitten with sorrow, King Chirrevit appeared. He had hoped to make Bird Alice Queen of the Larks; but now he found his fond hope had vanished: he felt it was impossible. Alas for Chirrevit!

The Queen putting the ring on her own finger, at once knew all that had befallen Alice while wearing it. She at once understood whose child she was, and was filled with joy to think how Eva and herself might now rejoice over their Treasures—lost on the

same day, and found on the same day. After she had kissed Alice fondly, and thanked her with many thanks, she recalled all her past adventures to her memory. Then the Queen bade her consider what gift she should bestow upon her, for whatever was in her power to give, that she was ready to bestow.

But she replied: "I seek nothing—I want nothing else; only restore me to my parents, to my home."

Eva-Maude smiled sweetly upon her, waved her hand, and said, "Have then your wish, sweet Alice. Adieu!" And she disappeared. But that was not the only kindness that Eva-Maude intended to show to sweet little Alice, the restorer of the ring.

Then she turned to King Chirrevit, and said, "Tell me, Chirrevit, King of Larks, what boon shall the Queen of the Fairies grant to him who has done herself so great a service, and shown so much kindness to unprotected innocence?"

Then answered Chirrevit sorrowfully: "Thanks, my Queen, for the good you wish me, for the good you intend; but Chirrevit has seen an end of hopes and wishes. He feels the pang of love disappointed—here he feels it;" and he struck his royal breast, and said, in the words of the poet:—

"This bosom is bursting with sorrow:
The world it is empty, the heart will die,
There's nothing to live for beneath the sky.
I've lived, I've loved, and that was to-day,
Make ready my grave-clothes to-morrow."

With these words, he reeled, he fell—alas for Chirrevit!—and expired. All the court was filled with sorrow, for all honoured the right royal and gentle king. The Queen herself stepped from the throne, and closed his eyes, saying, "Farewell, gentle king, farewell!" Then he was borne forth, with a dead march, laid upon the very same palm-leaf upon which Alice had been borne from India.

Thus died Chirrevit IX, the last king of the larks. He was the five-hundredth in descent from Rain-shower the Great, who, with thirteen of his subjects, was received by Noah into the Ark. He was a noble-hearted monarch, the gentlest of his race. Out of respect to his memory, the larks had no king after him, but have ever since lived under a republican form of government.

While the nation of the larks stood before the Queen, and when Alice had disappeared from their sight, then Eva, the Queen of King Ryence, was sitting in her bower at Castle Damouray, sadly musing over her unhappy loss, thinking of her lost child, Alice. She closed her eyes in weary sorrow; she opened them again, and there before her lay the well-known cot, and in it was sleeping the long-lost, long-lamented Treasure, sweet Alice, now grown sweeter and fairer still.

Who shall describe the joy of Eva, as she snatched her child from the cradle, and fondly embraced her. How can I tell you how glad, how happy, was the child Alice.

And the Fairy Queen held a council. This was the question she proposed to her councillors: "What shall we give to the sweet little Alice, who desired no other boon but to be restored to those who loved her?"

And it was at length agreed that every change she had undergone while she wore the fairy ring should confer upon her a corresponding grace.

So it was, and there was no one but loved her, for it was said of the child Alice ever afterwards: "That she was as gentle as the lamb, as gay as the lark; that she had the grace of the butterfly, the voice of the nightingale, the beauty of the rose, and the innocence of the dove."

—:o:—

A SHELL UPON THE SHORE.

I SAW a shell upon the shore,
Upon the shore it lay;
I marked it well, that curious shell,
The ocean's castaway.

Reclining on the yellow sand,
I listened to the roar
Of Ocean, with its ceaseless motion,
Ever, evermore.

Oh, what has fate in store for thee,
Thou waif of wind and tide?
Shall thee the deep, returning, sweep
And in its bosom hide

Again, or shall some human hand
Take up and treasure thee,
Snatched from the foam to inland home,
A relic of the sea?

As Jonah did, in time of old,
Before proud Nineveh,
Now here I'll wait and watch thy fate,
What will become of thee.

* * * *

Thus while old Ocean filled my ears,
That shell thus fixed mine eyes,
A little maiden, sea-shell laden,
Seized it for her prize.

She held it to her listening ear,
She hearkened to its moan;
I gazed and smiled upon the child,
As she stood there alone.

'Twas sweet to mark those eyes so bright,
The turn of that sweet head;
She read my face, with artless grace,
Tript up to me, and said,

As to my ear she held the shell,
"What does this murmur say?"
Thought I, "Ma belle, besides your shell,
You've picked me up to-day."

Said I, "Its song is like the sea,
Its deep-resounding home;
Beginning, no; nor end, I trow,
Will to its story come.

Ah! now it warns us: look and see,
Round yonder rock it flows;
The rising tide is settling wide
Your passage hence to close.

You must not, must not linger here;
Pass forward while you may,
Ere Ocean rise, before your eyes,
To sweep you both away."

I raised her quickly in my arms,
A burden light as feather.
"Fear not, for through those billows blue
We'll go, my bird, together."

Her voice I heard amid the splash
Of waters round my feet;
Nor lost her trusting paternoster,
Murmur low and sweet.

"Now hold it to my ear again,
That whisper of the sea,
And I will tell what says the shell,
My bird, to you and me."

It says, though dark the clouds above,
You're still beneath the eye
Of One can save you from the wave,
Though it run mountain high.

It was so. A rejoicing home
Gave thanks to Him, that He
Its light that day had snatched away
From peril of the sea.

Oft when I hear the moaning breeze,
In thought I seem to bear
A burden pressed against my breast,
A murmur in my ear

Still sounds—ah, me! can I forget,
When rising tempests roar,
That little child that sweetly smiled,
That Shell upon the Shore.

——:o:——

THE ROMAUNT OF ENID AND GERAINT.

"Eh, Seinte Mary, *benedicite*,
What aileth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed all this night, parde,
An elf-quene shal my ladye be
My nurse in wounds and gore.

"An elf-quene wol I love ywis
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun;
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun."

The Rime of Sire Thopas.

KNIGHTED at King Arthur's hand,
Geraint has belted on his brand
So bright, for brighter fame;
As flashes spark from burning gleed
Away the stainless knight doth speed;
And, like the lightning flame,
His gleaming crest it cleaves the air,
A mailèd hand and arm that bare
A pole-axe argent bright;
A lion gules blazed on his shield,
Passant in an argent field;
A chief three argent axes filled,
Emblazoned all aright.

O'er mountain path, o'er beaten road,
Through pastures green and meadows broad,
His charger bears him on;
Through plains extended far away,
Through forests wide for many a day,
Thus rode he all alone.

When nightly he laid down to rest,
His helm the pillow was he prest,
The green sward was his bed;
As knight to high emprise addrest,
He drank of brooklet waters blest,
On wilding salads fed.

He still rode on, the scene he scanned,
"Good sooth, this is a lovely land,
An Eden without end!
Through thousand thousand leagues I go,
No living wight I meet, I trow,
A foeman or a friend."

Just then, as struck by sudden fear,
His horse now plunges, now doth rear,
His fright a shudder tells;
The knight, amid his mad careers,
The sweetest sound of laughter hears,
Like seven silver bells.

He shades the sun-light from his eyes,
He looks around him and espies
A gleesome sight indeed:
A merry rout of grinning elves
Making sport to please themselves,
And tripping up his steed.

Where'er he looks two lovely eyes,
Deep and blue as summer skies,
Return a witching glance;
He hears a voice of flute-like tone,
Which says, "Geraint, ride on, ride on!"
He rides as in a trance.

Still riding onward through the glade,
A little child, a lovely maid,
Then came within his view;
She sat amid the greenwood shade,
And, heedless, with a ribbon played,
Of white and scarlet hue.

Now around her neck she placed,
And now she drew it round her waist,
Her cherished silken joy.
Anon three armèd men ride past,
The maiden banter, and, rude jest,
They snatch away the toy.

"Gramercy, little maid, I wis,
Without the ransom of a kiss,
You have it not again."
"No, no! pray leave me here alone
Give me my ribbon, and begone,
You churlish, bearded men."

Then to Geraint she raised her eyes:
"Sir Knight, befriend me now," she cries.
Geraint, upon the word,
Tied fast his charger to a tree,
And, looking on the churlish three,
Drew forth his beaming sword.

"Now by my spurs, and by this blade,
And by the sacred oath I said
When I was belted knight,
Weak innocence will I befriend,
As I am pledged, to death defend
A maiden in her right."

Then on him rushed the churlish three:
Saint Mary, 'twas a grief to see
The fury of the fray!
Three ruthless blades encounter one,
And ere the fight was fought and done
'Twas twilight of the day.

Ere one was toil-spent, one lay dead,
And one had to the greenwood fled,
Geraint was wounded thrice.
The maiden wept, the deep wounds bled,
He swooned away, he lay as dead,
And never more to rise.

Like pearls, her tears, in falling showers
Of precious seeds, shot up in flowers
Around him as he lay;
She tends him on his flowery bed,
She stanched the wounds that ran so red,
And washed the gore away.

She blew upon her hunting-horn,
O'er hill and plain the blast was borne;
Then, on the instant, see
Unnumbered fairies round her stand,
All waiting on their Queen's command,
The Queen of Faërie.

The knight was healed, but ere his eyes
Have opened, round his wrist she ties
The red-white ribbon broad.
Anon she whispered, "Sleep no more,
Geraint, of chivalry the flower,
Wear this for Eva-Maude."

He rose. She said, "Sir Knight, you stand
My welcome guest in Fairy Land;
Now ask a boon of me."
"Geraint would ask, if ask he might,
To be the Elf-Queen's own true knight,
Her own true knight to be."

Bright, brighter grew the Elf-Queen's eyes,
Her voice of melody replies;
Again that witching glance—
Again that sound of laughter swells,
A sound like peal of silver bells;
It makes his heart to dance.

"Yes, you shall be my own true knight,
And I will be your ladye bright"—
She gave her lily hand.
He swung her to the saddle then,
Geraint the happiest of men;
They came to Arthur's land.

They came to Camelot renowned;
A ladye of the Table Round
Became the Elf-Queen then;
Gracing Arthur's hall and board,
In Fairy Land called Eva-Maude,
And Enid among men.

——:o:——

L'ENVOI.

The Elf-Queen's love his soul possessed,
'Twas by her hand the pen was blessed,
The book was writ by fairy aid;
A conclave sat of bright-eyed fays,
They gave their Chronicler much praise,
And "*imprimatur*" 'twas they said.

Who was the bard of Damouray
An elfin ukase to gainsay,
And favour lose of Faërie?
What Sunday-born, or near or far,
But knows how kind these Fairies are,
And how imperious can be?

He would not loose the silken band
That holds him at his Queen's command:
He serves, but he would not be freed.
He would not lose your love, fair dames,
And yours, sweet youths and maids, who aims
To be more loved whenas you read.

Thus, reader dear, come to thy hand
These episodes of Fairy Land.

1875.

—:o:—